

## **When the Fourth Estate Goes to War: Media's Mark on Ethnic Conflict**

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### **Abstract**

The media remains a largely unstudied variable in civil wars, specifically ethnic violence. Ethnic conflict's interaction with the media as an opportunity structure illuminates a number of key findings. Free media reduces the likelihood of civil wars in general but struggles to regulate ethnic warfare. The dominant ethnic group's proportion of the population fails to predict conflict onset. However, the proportion of the ethnic group in power dictates the allowed media freedom. More hard data is required to show if segmented media actively causes ethnic conflict, but qualitative study of Rwanda and Yugoslavia's ethnic conflicts yield strong evidence of media's use as a weapon of ethnic war.

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Radio waves bearing messages of death and destruction once echoed across the Rwandan countryside. A voice called out, “You have missed some of the enemies. You must go back there and finish them off. The graves are not yet full!”<sup>[1]</sup> To the receptive Hutu audience, radio transmissions from stations like *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines* in concert with print publications such as *Kangura* aggravated existing tensions against the Tutsi population of Rwanda. Examining the transcripts of these documents, one finds repetitive demonization of the Tutsis and calls for violence in the years and months leading to the genocide of April, 1994. In the same decade, a Serbian accordionist named Novislav Djajic accompanied the score for the song “God is a Serb, and He Will Protect Us”, praising Radovan Karadžić’s leadership of the Serbian minority and the removal of Muslims in Bosnia. The song falls under the description of “Turbo Folk” which denotes an entire genre of ethnocentric music that sprung up among multiple ethnic groups in Yugoslavia at the time.<sup>[2]</sup> Djajic was later indicted for participation in genocide in 1997 and convicted of fourteen accounts of murder for his conduct during the Yugoslav Wars. Twenty-two years later, a man named Brenton Tarrant played the same song during his attack on a New Zealand Mosque.<sup>[3]</sup> Media, in all of its forms, has the potential to shape minds for better or for worse. In cases like these, what is the role of the media in the onset of ethnically fueled civil wars and conflicts?

Narrative building and agenda setting takes place before, during, and after a conflict breaks out. I aim to explain media’s role in the workup to civil conflict specifically. As seen in the Rwandan

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<sup>1</sup> Berkeley, B. (2003). *The graves are not yet full: race, tribe and power in the heart of Africa*. New York: Basic Books.

<sup>2</sup> Cvoro, U. (2016). *Turbo-folk music and cultural representations of national identity in former Yugoslavia*. London: Routledge.

<sup>3</sup> Zivanovic, M. (2019, March 27). New Zealand Mosque Gunman 'Inspired by Balkan Nationalists'. Retrieved from <https://balkaninsight.com/2019/03/15/new-zealand-mosque-gunman-inspired-by-balkan-nationalists/>

example, a given media outlet can gain a local monopoly over a demographic and shape its opinions and actions. This force is not necessarily malevolent on its own, but the capability to incite violence against outgroups remains. Teamed with segregated ethnic groups in a society, the media has the potential to constitute a majority of a given group's interaction with other demographics. The segmentation of media and the effects of ethnic ownership remain prominent matters for discussion in relation to the discussion of civil wars.

Ethnic and non-ethnic civil wars have been lumped together on much of civil war literature despite their often disparate causes and resolutions. In this light, the media's role in both types of civil war may be dictated by the ethnic composition of a subject country. Typically, a nation with multiple groups will have an ethnic group in power (EGIP) as defined by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program. The EGIP will have dominance over most sectors of society, including the media. As I will show in my research, the media is more free when the EGIP is most securely in power. As it declines, one can expect the media freedom to decline. The role of the media's freedom in civil conflict presents an intriguing avenue of study.

I will use a mixed method analysis to fully explore the topic. These findings are supplemented by an in-depth analysis of two qualitative case studies. The results of my study show that the media has different effects on ethnic versus non-ethnic civil wars. I find that, as media freedom declines, the likelihood of civil war increases. However, in ethnic war, the media's freedom seems to have no effect. If ethnic conflict exists, free media will not be of much use. The data shows that media freedom matters when the conflict is not based on ethnicity. Free media is powerless to stop ethnic conflict. In an ethnically tense society, the free media is likely polarized and segmented.

In societies where the EGIP drops below 50% of the population, media freedom also declines. While this does not increase the likelihood of ethnic conflict, it does raise the probability of civil

war in general. Ethnic conflict can be stoked by both sides of the media score spectrum. A free media in a diverse society will segment along demographic lines. In these respective media echo chambers, each ethnicity becomes its own miniature EGIP. The negative image of other groups comes about via a feedback loop between the consumers' bias towards their prejudice against outgroups. The dominant force in this loop is the agenda setting capability of the EGIP whether in control of the government or in a segmented market.

The media freedom fails to regulate ethnic civil war because, if ethnic tensions exist, the respective ethnic belligerents can use the media as a weapon. Media will act as an aggravating agent in an ethnic dyad. This can happen in an authoritarian or democratic state. In a free society with ethnic tensions, the media score is concealed. Unfortunately, there is no data on ethnic control of the media, but one can suspect that if there was an ethnic media freedom score, it would be similar to the government media freedom score for the onset of civil war.

When examining the media's role in ethnic civil wars, the definitive results remain obscured by a lack of data. Nevertheless, clues are left by what data is available. From these clues, I explore the media's aggravating effect on ethnic tensions and its potential to foment violence. Free, homogeneous societies with free media are the least likely to have civil wars. When an EGIP declines as a share of the population, it will tighten control of the media and other spheres because of their shrinking status and dominance. This itself is an aggravator of civil war. In concert with this, self-segregating ethnicities can stratify into segmented markets. In each of these markets, confirmation bias drives an advantage towards media outlets that tell their own ethnicity's story. These stories can boil over into real world violence when the conditions align with the media's agenda setting ability.

## **Literature Review**

The causes of civil war remain multivariate and difficult to pinpoint. Moreover, there are causes of internal conflict that are not highlighted in the subject literature. A significant gap exists when considering media's effect on stoking ethnic tensions. In heterogeneous societies, one can observe self segregation both physically and socially. How the media adapts and shapes this environment and perhaps inflames these stress factors into violence is the primary impetus of this article.

Before delving into the literature on civil war, one should examine how media separates markets and creates estrangement conducive to conflict. Snyder argues that media outlets stratify and corner sections of the market in much the same way as any other industry. As media firms find an audience, they cater to its tastes and biases to assure consistent consumption.<sup>[4]</sup> In an ethnically diverse country, this comes in the form of conforming to the salient struggles of a particular group. As such, a media outlet can form a partial monopoly over that segment of the market while only owning a proportionally small share of the overall system. Snyder emphasizes this phenomenon in the context of constructing national narratives. However, there is no reason to limit this mechanism to just this idea. In fact, one should expect the media to be more susceptible to this process in an already ethnically segregated and contentious society.<sup>[5]</sup> Taking this one step further, the media can be used to drive violence. The general mechanism of media's segmentation of markets holds true regardless of the agenda being driven.

Mastro (2015) expands on Snyder's segmentation of media markets but elaborates how this phenomenon interacts with ethnic heterogeneity. Citing the fact that ethnic groups tend to self segregate, she argues that much of a particular race's interaction with another is

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<sup>4</sup> Snyder, Jack, and Karen Ballentine. "Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas." *International Security* 21.2 (1996): 5. Print, pg 5.

<sup>5</sup> Mastro, Dana. "Why the Media's Role in Issues of Race and Ethnicity Should Be in the Spotlight." *Journal of Social Issues* 71.1 (2015): 1-16. Print, pg 3.

through the media. As such, media's coverage of racial issues has a magnifying effect. Media's effect is further exaggerated by the proliferation of instant access to the internet and live news. The internet creates an environment where one can be saturated in media to the detriment of real life interaction.<sup>6</sup> Media outlets have the potential to compose a majority of one's interactions with a particular ethnic group. Mastro goes on to argue that, because of the media's excessive influence over race relations, it has the potential to stoke ethnic conflict.

Not only does the media hold excessive influence when ethnically diverse populations self-segregate, McCombs argues that the media drives agenda as much as it reports on it. Originating the Agenda Setting Theory of Mass Media, McCombs finds that there is a, "correlation between the ranking of issues on the media agenda and the ranking accorded those same issues on the subsequent public agenda."<sup>7</sup> He shows a strong correlation between topics the media chooses to cover and their salience to public agenda. McCombs finds this phenomenon to hold at both the local and national level and across multiple cultures and time periods. His findings are also supported by other studies (Soroka 2002); Archibald and Guidere (2006)). Mass media also hold a good deal of influence over how topics are understood and processed. The way the media covers topics can have an impactful effect on political behavior. McCombs cites the 1976 New York primary presidential election. The candidates who were depicted negatively in the media performed far worse than candidates who were portrayed otherwise.<sup>8</sup> McCombs argues that the media's tone precedes the public's acceptance. The agenda setting translates to public and political behavior. The agenda setting theory of mass media provides a mechanism by which ethnic hostility can boil over.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pg 2.

<sup>7</sup> McCombs, Maxwell. "The Agenda-Setting Role of the Mass Media in the Shaping of Public Opinion." University of Texas at Austin (2003). Print, pg 2.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pg 3.

Moustafa (2016) expands on this theory and brings it into the sphere of ethnic conflict and civil war.

Analyzing the Kirkuk Conflict in Iraq, Moustafa sheds light how ethnic ownership of media affects reception and coverage. He begins the discussion with a review of the agenda-setting theory of media. Moustafa reviews that, because the average viewer's only perception of events outside of their immediate experience is with the media, those news sources are capable of shaping and setting public opinion.<sup>[9]</sup> Unless one is physically there to witness an event firsthand, media has a monopoly on the narrative of that event. Self segregation creates an environment where a significant amount of one's interaction with another ethnicity can be via coverage of that group by the media.

Moustafa tweaks the agenda-setting theory by adding the assertion that certain audiences are more receptive to ideas that affirm their biases. In his example, the Turkmen minority in Kirkuk was far more receptive to coverage of violence against the Turkmen because it confirmed their anecdotal perception of the Kurds and Arabs. Moreover, Moustafa shows that the ethnicity of media owners can have a greater effect on the audience's reception than the coverage itself. He writes, "it is hard for an ethnic group, which believes that its members are oppressed, to trust the oppressing group's media no matter how 'objective' the oppressing group's media are. In such situations, the group will turn to alternative media, particularly to their own mediator to those which they believe reflect their voices."<sup>[10]</sup> The extent to which agenda-setting succeeds is contingent on how receptive the audience is to the idea being pushed. This brings in Snyder's argument concerning the segmentation of media. If a member of an ethnic group only owns 30% of a given media market, they may still maintain a monopoly over members of his own group due to the

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<sup>9</sup> Moustafa, Salih. "Kirkuk Conflict in Its Ethnic/Political Media: The Turkmen Newspaper Alqal'a as a Model." *National Identities* 18.3 (2016): 265-87. Print, pg 266.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pg 270.

above mentioned phenomena.<sup>[11]</sup>

Chun and Min show how the Japanese mass media's coverage of conflict with North Korea had an appreciable effect on the population's treatment of the Korean minority.<sup>[12]</sup> Sambanis agrees that ethnic heterogeneity has an effect on the outbreak of conflict but leaves the causal mechanisms unexplored.<sup>[13]</sup> Granted, Moonseok Chun and Jeonghun Min are detailing a case in which the violence does not break out into a full fledged civil war. The reason they are pertinent is because their article shows that mass media has the potential to stoke ethnic conflict anywhere in the world, from Iraq to Japan.

Having established the ability of the media to set agendas that open fissures in ethnic dyads, one should probe the differences between ethnic and nonethnic civil wars. Sambanis finds that there are significant differences in the onset and resolution of ethnic versus non-ethnic wars. Ethnic heterogeneity contributes to a greater likelihood of civil conflict. Moreover, the economic variables lose a degree of their original purchase in ethnic wars. He contends that the modernization theory of civil war places too great an emphasis on economic variables. Sambanis finds a significant relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and the outbreak of civil war.<sup>[14]</sup> While Sambanis observes that ethnic heterogeneity has a worsening effect on conflict onset, he does not sufficiently explain why this divide worsens and contributes to the outbreak of a conflict. One possible explanation is that ethnic heterogeneity builds media segmentation through ethnic groups seeking a favorable balance of power.

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<sup>11</sup> Snyder, Jack, and Karen Ballentine. "Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas." *International Security* 21.2 (1996): 5. Print, pg 8.

<sup>12</sup> Moon Seok, Chun, and Min Jeonghun. "The Impact of Mass Media on Ethnic Conflict." *Conference Papers -- Southern Political Science Association*. (2009): 1-15. Print, pg 3.

<sup>13</sup> Sambanis, Nicholas. "Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes?: A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry (Part 1)." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45.3 (2001): 259-82. Print, pg 260.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pg 262.



In an environment where the media has a potentially disproportionate effect on intergroup relations, it is important to discuss how this system fits into the existing debate of greed versus grievance. A discussion on civil war would be incomplete without bringing in Collier and his article "Greed and Grievance in Civil War". He defines greed as the selfish desire of a group to better their relative position. If it is seen as more lucrative to start a civil war than to suffer under the present regime, a conflict will ensue.<sup>[15]</sup> In the context of the media, portrayal of one group as the "haves" and one's own as the "have nots" has the potential to fan the flames. With regards to grievance, he defines it as the actual perceived wrongs a group has suffered under the status quo. Between the two, Collier concludes that the greed mechanism is the more effective predictor of civil war.

However, Sambanis provides a strong rebuttal. He says that treating all civil wars as one category is incorrect. Sambanis instead creates a separate category for ethnically driven civil wars because of their distinct causes. By separating civil wars into identity and non-identity driven, the field of data becomes less cluttered. Sambanis finds that grievances play a far larger role in ethnic conflict than other types of civil wars.<sup>[16]</sup> The agenda setting power of media can play a part in this side of the argument. As seen in the Rwandan hate radio example, grievance remains a strong component of disparaging another ethnic group. Ethnic heterogeneity creates opportunities for market segmentation and voicing grievances in the media. Greed and grievance remain beneath the surface before a group has the opportunity to bring them to fruition. Access and control of the media can act as an opportunity structure providing the means to act. In either case, the media is able to play a role in shaping the pre-conflict

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<sup>15</sup> Collier, Paul, and Anke Hoeffler. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford economic papers* 56.4 (2004): 563-95. Print, pg 569.

<sup>16</sup> Sambanis, Nicholas. "Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes?: A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry (Part 1)." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45.3 (2001): 259-82. Print, pg 261.

environment.

Returning to the agenda setting theory itself, Cederman argues that ethnic groups are more likely to rebel, “the more excluded from state power they are, especially if they have recently lost power, [and] the higher their mobilizational capacity”.<sup>[17]</sup> Cederman’s theory has implications for relative ethnic power in general. Media access and ownership can be a measure of relative power between ethnic groups because of its use as an opportunity structure. Regardless, the agenda setting theory in tandem with segregation creates an avenue for conflict.

Before placing too much emphasis on heterogeneity’s role in conflict, one should consider the counterarguments. Fearon and Laitin find that, when per capita income is controlled for, ethnically diverse countries see no more instances of civil war than other nations.<sup>[18]</sup> They cite economic factors as the primary drivers of internal violence especially insurgency. Additionally, an economically healthy state has more resources to suppress conflict or an ethnic group’s ambitions. Sambanis addresses Fearon's misgivings and shows that an analysis of civil wars as an aggregate ultimately leads to misleading results. He clarifies that to lump all types of civil war together into one analysis, “implicitly suggests that there are no such differences,” and describes this as a serious oversight.<sup>[19]</sup> Sambanis instead separates ethnically driven conflicts from other types of civil war. With this key step implemented, he finds a causal relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and civil war.

Perhaps a synthesis of the two sides comes from Montalvo and

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<sup>17</sup> Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min. "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis." *World Politics* 62.1 (2010): 87-119. Print, pg 92.

<sup>18</sup> Fearon, James D, and David D Laitin. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American political science review* 97.1 (2000): 75-90. Print, pg 77.

<sup>19</sup> Sambanis, Nicholas. "Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes?: A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry (Part 1)." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45.3 (2001): 259-82. Print, pg 261.

Reynal-Querol in “Ethnic Polarization, Potential Conflict, and Civil Wars”. Considering the seemingly contradictory data, they use polarization of ethnic groups as a better model of ethnic conflict. They disagree with both Fearon and Sambanis by stating that their emphasis on fractionalization does not fully encapsulate the idea of ethnic conflict. They argue that, “the measure of ethnic heterogeneity appropriate to capture potential conflict should be a polarization measure.”<sup>20</sup> With this in mind, Sambanis appears to have the upper hand over Fearon in the sense that ethnic diversity does have an effect on the outbreak of ethnic conflict. However, Montalvo and Reynal-Querol show that polarization of ethnic groups in the context of diverse societies is a more nuanced predictor.

The mechanisms for this polarization between ethnic groups is the primary focus of this article. Drawing from the previously mentioned theories of the media’s agenda setting, one can see a strong avenue of exploration. If ethnic groups have grievances with another, these are likely to remain latent until a force guides them to violence. When polarization comes into the mix, these grievances spill over into the realm of physical conflict. By needing to cater to a market’s taste, a media outlet will set its agenda to confirm the target demographic’s biases. This, in concert with parallel structures in a rival ethnic group, can lead to conflict.

### **Theory and Hypotheses Development**

The existing literature leads to a number of hypotheses. Syder’s argument that media stratifies like any other market commodity drives the question towards how this affects ethnic relations. Moustafa’s analysis of the Kirkuk Conflict in Iraq as well as Chun and Min’s study of mass media on ethnic tensions shed some light on the media’s role. McComb’s theory of agenda setting shows that the media is rarely impartial and is subject to the ambitions of its owners. These, among

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<sup>20</sup> Reynal-Querol, Marta. "Ethnicity, Political Systems, and Civil Wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46.1 (2002): 29-54. Print, pg 34.

other sources, strongly imply that the media has a robust and measurable effect on ethnic as well as non-ethnic civil wars. I attempt to measure and quantify these effects with the following hypotheses.

I suspect that a lack of discourse aggravates existing distrust or grievances. Media outlets can either be incentivized to push narratives damaging to another group or will actively push these stories. Seldom can a media outlet act as an impassioned observer of facts according to McComb.<sup>[21]</sup> With this in mind, a group's grievances will either get exaggerated coverage or will be stifled depending on that group's access to media ownership. A free media where criticism is not punished allows for outlets of expression. If dissenters have no other outlet for their activism than physical action, civil unrest becomes far more likely. This is why some authoritarian regimes have opted to allow a free media as a means of gauging grievances and allowing an outlet for dissenting passions.<sup>[22]</sup>

There is little incentive for a dominant ethnic group within its own segment to be an objective observer of ethnic tensions.<sup>[23]</sup> This decreases the visibility of minority grievances and thus the minority's ability to peacefully voice its grievances.<sup>[24]</sup> However, if there is a free and relatively deregulated information space, the minority can found its own media outlets and compete in the market for consumers. In the context of a repressive mediascape, the minority has few options except physical demonstrations to try to change the political landscape. All of these factors together lead to the first hypothesis.

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<sup>21</sup> McCombs, Maxwell. "The Agenda-Setting Role of the Mass Media in the Shaping of Public Opinion." University of Texas at Austin (2003). Print, pg 2.

<sup>22</sup> Egorov, G., Guriev, S., & Sonin, K. (2009). Why Resource-poor Dictators Allow Freer Media: A Theory and Evidence from Panel Data. *American Political Science Review*, 103(4), 645–668. doi: 10.1017/s0003055409990219

<sup>23</sup> Moon Seok, Chun, and Min Jeonghun. "The Impact of Mass Media on Ethnic Conflict." *Conference Papers -- Southern Political Science Association*. (2009): 1-15. Print, pg 3.

<sup>24</sup> Moustafa, Salih. "Kirkuk Conflict in Its Ethnic/Political Media: The Turkmen Newspaper Alqal'a as a Model." *National Identities* 18.3 (2016): 265-87. Print, pg 270.

H1: *Free media generally reduces the likelihood of civil wars.*

Returning to the subject of ethnic civil wars, some argue that more homogenous societies seem inoculated against conflict because less intense identity competition allows governments to open up society for freer expression. Schneider finds that more ethnically homogenous societies are also more likely to consolidate democracy.<sup>[25]</sup> Free societies allow the free expression of various grievances and provide outlets for dissent. Bratton, Horowitz and others have noted that intra-ethnic trust is greater than trust with outsiders.<sup>[26]</sup> <sup>[27]</sup> Where identity competition is high, groups are less willing to trust and cooperate across ethnic lines. A free society where large groups disdain and distrust each other may be just as susceptible to civil strife as societies where overtly repressive regimes tamp down the expression of grievance.

Ethnically diverse societies are plagued with a number of other problems that their homogeneous counterparts do not suffer. Analogous to international competition, groups may perceive their chances of victory as high in conditions of parity and become more willing to fight. Buhaug, Cedarman, and Rød expand this by saying that the probability of conflict increases as the size of excluded ethnicities increase as a proportion of the population.<sup>[28]</sup> In their construct group size and thus potential power and the presence of a grievance can amplify prospects for conflict. Aggrieved groups who are demographically powerful are more likely to strike back. Flipping this

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<sup>25</sup> Schneider, Carsten. 2009. *The Consolidation of Democracy: Comparing Europe and Latin America*. New York, NY: Routledge.

<sup>26</sup> Bratton, Michael, Robert Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi E. 2005. *Public Opinion, Democracy, and Market Reform in Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>27</sup> Horowitz, Donald. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>28</sup> Buhaug, Halvard, Lars-Erik Cederman, and Jan Ketil Rød. 2008. "Disaggregating Ethno-Nationalist Civil Wars: A Dyadic Test of Exclusion Theory.. *International Organization* 62 (03):531-551. doi: doi:10.1017/S0020818308080181.

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construct around, if the group in power is sufficiently large, and its demographic power assured, it may be less inclined to engage in provocative behavior.

Finally, ethnic competition leads to an analogous structure of the security dilemma of international relations. The theory of the security dilemma explains that security is the first aim of a given party. Posen elaborates on ethnic relations, “The competition will often continue to a point at which the competing entities have amassed more power than needed for security and, thus, consequently begin to threaten others. Those threatened will respond in turn.”<sup>[29]</sup> This phenomenon of brinkmanship only occurs where there is no clear and authoritative ethnic group in power. In this anarchy, where the ethnic group in power’s majority is weak, there is a greater likelihood of civil war. This leads to the next hypothesis.

H2: *If the ethnic group in power’s majority is stronger, civil conflict will be less likely.*

As stated previously, free and homogenous societies are the least likely to have a civil war. However, it is interesting to note the effect of declining homogeneity on freedom, specifically in the media. Assuming that Snyder and Mastro are correct about how the media stratifies into various markets, I expect that segmentation will worsen ethnic tensions. The population will likely be segregated either by mandate or in-group preference. Second, media outlets will segment to cater to these ethnic groups’ priorities. Finally, a declining ethnic group in power will attempt to shore up its hold on power as a matter of self preservation. All of these factors come together to form the next hypothesis.

H3: *The stronger the majority of the ethnic group in power, the more likely they are to allow media freedom.*

Next, I suspect that the national media will struggle to regulate ethnic tensions. The first reason is that ethnic wars are an intimate and

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<sup>29</sup> Posen, B. R. (2008). The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict. *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, 103–124. doi: 10.2307/j.ctv36zq9w.10.

local affair. Oftentimes, the ethnic grievances can reach down to the individual level and extend up to the state. Non-ethnic conflict operates under this model as well, but I argue that ethnic tensions can permeate to much deeper and individual hatreds. The grievances experienced create more opportunities for violence due to their local nature.<sup>[30]</sup> National media may not have sufficient purchase to regulate ethnic tensions. Moreover, there are conditions where the national media is dominated by one of the belligerent ethnic groups. In this scenario, the other groups will not be open to its messages and will seek alternative sources of information.<sup>[31]</sup>

By segmenting a media market, an ethnic group in power (EGIP) can effectively reduce the local media freedom by creating a local monopoly. The level and type of discourse that a given ethnic dyad has can be defined by an agenda setting media. If there is a lack of access to ownership of the media, one can predict a worsening of societal tensions by the demographics depicted poorly. Segregated and separated societies are more susceptible to this phenomenon as well as more likely to have ethnic tensions. As such, even if there is a national media, there will be ethnic groups that it cannot reach. In these insulated bubbles, other media outlets will rise and fill the gap. These upstart media outlets are incentivized to cater to the specific market's taste and predispositions.<sup>[32]</sup> In these manufactured echo chambers, an ethnicity which is a minority on the national scale can attain an EGIP monopoly status with its media outlets.

H4. *Free media reduces the likelihood of non-ethnic conflict, but has limited impact on reducing ethnic based conflict.*

These hypotheses form a picture of media's effect on ethnic

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<sup>30</sup> Reynal-Querol, Marta. "Ethnicity, Political Systems, and Civil Wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46.1 (2002): 29-54. Print, pg 34.

<sup>31</sup> Moustafa, Salih. "Kirkuk Conflict in Its Ethnic/Political Media: The Turkmen Newspaper Alqal'a as a Model." *National Identities* 18.3 (2016): 265-87. Print, pg 270.

<sup>32</sup> Snyder, Jack, and Karen Ballentine. "Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas." *International Security* 21.2 (1996): 5. Print, pg 8.

relations and civil war. I will test these theories using a mixed method approach. As I will explain later, the current state of the available data leaves gaps that need to be supplemented by qualitative studies. Regardless, the existing literature on the subject paints a picture of an understudied and influential factor that can drive an ethnic dyad to violence. These theories open the door to a new avenue of civil conflict research and literature and a hard examination of the media's society shaping role. Next, I explain in detail the methods, variables, and datasets I use to test these hypotheses.

## Research Design

### Datasets

First, I will describe the data sets used for the quantitative sections. In testing my hypotheses, I ran through several iterations of datasets to explore the question at hand. To capture the effect of the media, I use the Global Media Freedom Dataset (GMFD). The data stretches from 1946-2017. Media freedom is tabulated on a three point scale to determine if the media is free, partially free, or not free. Media freedom has the capability to indicate ethnic control of the media if it is teamed with measures of ethnic control of the government.

To capture both ethnic power dynamics and civil conflict data, I merged with the Grow<sup>UP</sup> Project's data aggregator. From this, I pulled their country level ethnic power access data as well as their conflict data on civil war. To capture economic effects, I merged data from the Penn World Tables and the World Bank for numbers on gross domestic product (GDP) and oil production. Finally, I merged the set with the Polity Data Series to control for democracy. This data set together captures the necessary country level controls and allows for the *media score* to show if it has an effect. The years included are 1946-2009. With the Global Media Freedom Dataset, Grow<sup>UP</sup> Project, Penn World Tables, and the Polity Data Series, I have a robust picture of media, ethnic conflict, economic conditions, and civil war onset.

For the qualitative studies, I draw from several studies as well



as primary accounts. For the Rwandan case, I utilize Yanagizawa-Drott's research on the Rwandan Hate Radio's measured effect on the genocide of the Tutsis. I also delve into translated transcripts of several broadcasts to provide indicative examples of the incitement of violence. For the Serbian example, I bring in De la Brosse's 2003 study on political propaganda's effect on ethnic violence. From his work, I am able to access several primary source quotations and his own analysis.

### **Dependent Variables**

The primary interest of the project is the onset of civil war, specifically ethnic conflict. To measure this, I use the Grow<sup>Up</sup> Project's onset indicator that drops ongoing instances of civil war. This is because I wanted to avoid more recent cases where all of the data sets may not have the necessary data yet. This captures all civil wars including instances of both ethnic and non-ethnic war. This is labeled as *All Civil War* in table 1. As indicated by Sambanis, ethnic civil wars are fundamentally different in their causes and risk factors. To capture ethnic conflict, I use Grow<sup>Up</sup> Project's ethnic onset variable which codes ethnic war as when one or more ethnic group is, "linked to the respective Armed Conflict Dataset conflict in the onset year."<sup>[33]</sup> In other words, if an ethnic group is linked to the onset of a conflict as a belligerent, it is coded as an ethnic war. This is labeled as *Ethnic Civil War* in table 1. *Non-Ethnic Civil War* takes the cases flagged as ethnic war and subtracts them from all cases of civil war. This leaves exclusively non-ethnic based civil wars. All dependent variables are dichotomous. In other words, there are only two conditions, peace or war. In accordance with the Grow<sup>Up</sup> Project's onset indicator, the threshold from peace to war is when the conflict reaches 25 battle-related deaths in under a year. This is aggregated from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program.

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<sup>33</sup> Luc Girardin, Philipp Hunziker, Lars-Erik Cederman, Nils-Christian Bormann, and Manuel Vogt. 2015. *GROWup* - Geographical Research On War, Unified Platform. ETH Zurich. <http://growup.ethz.ch/>

### Independent Variable

For quantitative analysis, I utilize logistic regression. I use the Global Media Freedom Dataset's freedom index for the variable *media score*. The GMFD data scores from 0-3. 0 means that there is no data or insufficient information. A score of 1 means the media is free. 2 means imperfectly free where, "social, legal, or economic costs related to the criticism of government or government officials limits public criticism, but investigative journalism and criticism of major policy failings can and does occur."<sup>34</sup> A score of 3 means a directly controlled media by the government. I shifted the scale to be from -1 to 1 with -1 being controlled media, 0 being imperfectly free, and 1 being free. This is to clean up the results into clean positives and negatives. I dropped the cases where there was insufficient data.

*Media score* can possibly be a proxy of ethnic control of the media. The logic follows that if an ethnic group controls the government and the government controls the media, I make the reasonable assumption that the ethnic group in power controls the media. Ideally, there would be a dataset on ethnic control of the media, but no such dataset exists. None of the findings in this article hang their validity on this assumption, however the qualitative studies incorporated provide small glimpses of this mechanism. This is a valuable avenue of future study and research.

### Controls

In order to secure a robust and comprehensive analytical landscape, I implemented the following controls. The first control variable is a measure of the ethnic group in power's proportion of the overall population. This comes from Grow<sup>UP</sup> Project's data on country level dynamics. It is important to consider the ethnic group in power's

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<sup>34</sup>Whitten-Woodring, Jenifer and Douglas A. Van Belle. 2015. "The Correlates of Media Freedom: An Introduction of the Global Media Freedom Dataset." *Political Science] Research and Methods*, FirstView Article/December 2015. DOI 10.1017/psrm.2015.68, Published online: 02 December 2015.

proportion to control for ethnic diversity's effect on conflict onset. As supported by the literature outlined in the theory section, I expect to see a measurable effect from ethnic heterogeneity. I use the ethnic group in power's population proportion to control for demographics. This is shown by the variable *EGIP population* in table 1.

Next, the economic side of conflict should be considered. I use the Penn World Tables' measures Gross Domestic Product (GDP). A significant amount of conflict can be attributed to economic variables. I incorporated real GDP to control for inflation. I then used a logarithmic scale to clear up the picture and prevent scaling issues with exponential growth. This variable is labeled as *Log RGDP*. Drawing from the same dataset, I add population data. I modify the raw population numbers and apply a logarithmic scale to control for exponential population growth over time. In Table 1, this is *Log Population*.

Groups who have had conflicts in the past are more likely to experience conflict in the future.<sup>[35]</sup> This effect drops off as the number of peaceful years goes on. To control for this effect, I use the Grow<sup>Up</sup> Project's variable *war history* which measures war history as a, "count variable indicating number of conflict onsets this country has previously experienced."<sup>[36]</sup> Closely related to this concept, I include their variable *peace years* because of its tandem effect of reducing the effect of war history. *Peace years* is a measure of the length of time between conflicts. The longer the separation from a previous conflict, the less likely it is to recur.

Democracy also plays a large role in determining if conflict is likely in a state. This is measured by the variable *polity 2* in table 1. If a country is more free and there are more means of political expression outside of violence, said violence is less likely to occur. To control for democracy, I use the Polity Data Series' polity 2 score. This measures

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<sup>35</sup> Hegre, H., & Sambanis, N. (2006). Sensitivity analysis of empirical results on civil war onset. *Journal of conflict resolution*, 50(4), 508-535.

<sup>36</sup> Girardin, Hunziker, Cederman, Bormann, Vogt, pg 117.

a society's degree of political freedom on a scale from -10 to 10. I also include a square of the polity 2 variable because of the widespread of scores with fewer intermediate values.

Finally, it is important to consider the role of oil in the outbreak of civil conflict. Ross describes the impact of what he describes as the oil curse. This is when states become dependent on oil as a source of income, fail to economically diversify, neglect democratic development, and generally will be more at risk for civil wars. Based on Ross's design, I create a variable labeled *oilrich*. I do this by first generating a measure of oil income per capita by using Ross's *oilrent*. I divide oil rent by GDP and multiply by GDP per capita to generate oil per capita. Using this measure, I convert it into a binary measure if the oil income per capita is more or less than 100. This final conversion generates the variable *oilrich* which I use in my regressions to control for Ross's oil curse.

### **Methodology**

To test my hypotheses quantitatively, I use logistic regression. I work with a total of 4,417 total observations for the basic civil conflict model and 4,788 observations in the ethnic conflict model. The pseudo R squared scores of these models are .113 and .111 respectively. I tested the hypotheses by evaluating the output of these models. I adhere to the 95% confidence level standard in order for a variable to be deemed significant. I use two case studies for qualitative analysis. I delve into the Rwandan Genocide and the Yugoslav wars as illustrative examples of media's role in stoking ethnic conflict. I analyze primary source documents and studies done by Yanagizawa-Drott and De La Brosse.

### **Findings**

Hypothesis 1 states that free media generally reduces the likelihood of civil wars. Conversely, a lack of free media increases the likelihood of civil wars. For this hypothesis, I included all cases of ethnic and non-ethnic. As one can see in Table 1, the media freedom score has a

significant effect where  $p \leq .05$ . The coefficient is negative which means a higher level of media freedom is associated with a drop in civil conflict probability. This confirms hypothesis 1 for the general case of civil wars. Importantly, its effect does not hold for ethnic war and the coefficient changes sign. Regardless, the general claim of media freedom's tempering effect on civil tensions is demonstrated by the base model. Speaking to the negative effects of a controlled media, the results confirm this as well. Because of the modified scale between -1 and 1 for the media freedom score, I can confirm that a controlled media is positively associated with a greater likelihood of civil conflict.

Table - 1: logistic analysis

	All Civil War		Ethnic Civil War		Non-Ethnic Civil War	
	Coeff.	(statistic)	Coeff.	(statistic)	Coeff.	(statistic)
Log RGDP	<b>-.3616</b>	(.0019)	-.2566	(.0857)	-.1776	(.1985)
Log Population	<b>.5141</b>	(.0000)	<b>.4505</b>	(.0084)	<b>.3076</b>	(.0426)
Media Score	<b>-.4130</b>	(.0447)	.1083	(.6688)	<b>-.5158</b>	(.0454)
War History	.0443	(.5236)	<b>.1508</b>	(.0339)	.0858	(.0944)
Peace Years	<b>-.0261</b>	(.0009)	<b>-.0350</b>	(.0006)	-.0064	(.4576)
Square Polity 2	<b>-.0138</b>	(.0002)	<b>-.1283</b>	(.0052)	.0322	(.1943)
Polity 2	.0270	(.1704)	-.0217	(.6153)	<b>-.0190</b>	(.0001)
Oil Rich	<b>.5181</b>	(.0354)	.2396	(.4293)	.2134	(.5808)
EGIP Population	.1890	(.5242)	.4196	(.2926)	.3937	(.1929)
Constant	-.2567	(.7778)	-1.710	(.1366)	<b>-2.661</b>	(.0146)

*Bolded values indicate a significance of at least a 95% confidence level.*

*Media Score's scale is shifted from the original 1-3 scale to a -1 to 1 scale.*

Hypothesis 2 posits that if the ethnic group in power's majority is stronger, civil conflict will be less likely. To measure this, I use the ethnic group in power's proportion of the overall population. As seen

in table 1, the ethnic group's proportion does not have an effect on the onset of civil war. However, this is not to say that ethnic heterogeneity has no effect. It should be noted that this measure of ethnic dominance compares the proportions nationally for all models. The model compares whether a country's ethnic group in power is large or small compared to the EGIP in other nations. While shown at the country level to not be significant, Buhaug et al find that an increase in size of an excluded minority does increase the likelihood of conflict onset.<sup>37</sup> This highlights that the relative difference in power is more important than the overall ethnic proportions. However, oftentimes the outright majority will also control the majority of societal power. Buhaug et al argue that the relative power disparities between ethnic groups will influence ethnic conflict. This phenomenon eats away at the representative quality of simply measuring the ethnic group in power's majority. Consider an EGIP with 40% population and 2 potential challengers each with about 30%. In this second case the EGIP with the same 40% population is more likely to experience challenges according to Buhaug and his coauthors. Unfortunately, a group's size relative to the EGIP is not easily measurable at the country level. While there may not be a direct connection to the absolute size of an EGIP to conflict, that size may indirectly influence propensity for conflict through other mechanisms, such as their policies toward media freedoms.

Hypothesis 3 gathers that the stronger the majority of the ethnic group in power, the more likely they are to allow media freedom. The effect of the relative power of an EGIP on media freedom is important for the question at hand. I continue in the assumption that an EGIP in control of the government will also control the state-run media. Additionally, ethnically segmented markets interact uniquely with an EGIP. The overarching EGIP can be threatened by losing its

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<sup>37</sup> Buhaug, Halvard, Lars-Erik Cederman, and Jan Ketil Rød. 2008. "Disaggregating Ethno-Nationalist Civil Wars: A Dyadic Test of Exclusion Theory.. *International Organization* 62 (03):531-551. doi: doi:10.1017/S0020818308080181.

influence over a given demographic. Its local superiority is challenged by the phenomenon of segmented media markets.

To measure this effect, I performed a Two-sample T-test with equal variances. I created a binary variable to measure if the ethnic group in power constituted more or less than 50% of the overall population. I chose 50% because I reasoned that measuring a simple majority was more accurate than choosing an arbitrary number anywhere else. A simple majority is an efficient way of indicating the EGIP's assurance of its status in the power hierarchy. If an ethnic group is at least 50%, it is clearly dominant in the country's power structure. With this binary variable, I ran the T-test to determine its effect on media freedom. The results are shown below in Table 2. Analyzing the output, one can see that a decline in the EGIP's proportion below 50% leads to an overall decline in media freedom.

Table - 2: difference in mean

	Number of Observations	Mean	C.I. Lower	C.I. Higher
EGIP < 50%	54	-.8148	-.9218	-.7078
EGIP ≥ 50%	153	-.5425	-.6493	-.4357
Difference		-.2723	-.4625	-.0822

t = -2.823

degrees of freedom = 205

Pr(T < t) = .0026

Pr(|T| > |t|) = .0052

Pr(T > t) = .9974

The EGIP below 50% of the population will get desperate as its grasp over a society declines or remains under threat. The bivariate test

measures this on either side of the 50% demographic waterline. In an attempt to protect itself and its hold on power, the EGIP will try to entrench itself. This is why one can see a significant decline in media freedom. As shown before, a decline in media freedom increases the likelihood of a non-ethnic civil war. However, this decline in media freedom is not limited to government controlled sources. An EGIP above 50% will allow more media expression because it is secure in its position. With fewer threats to its hegemony, the EGIP greater than 50% will allow more leeway for criticism and democracy.

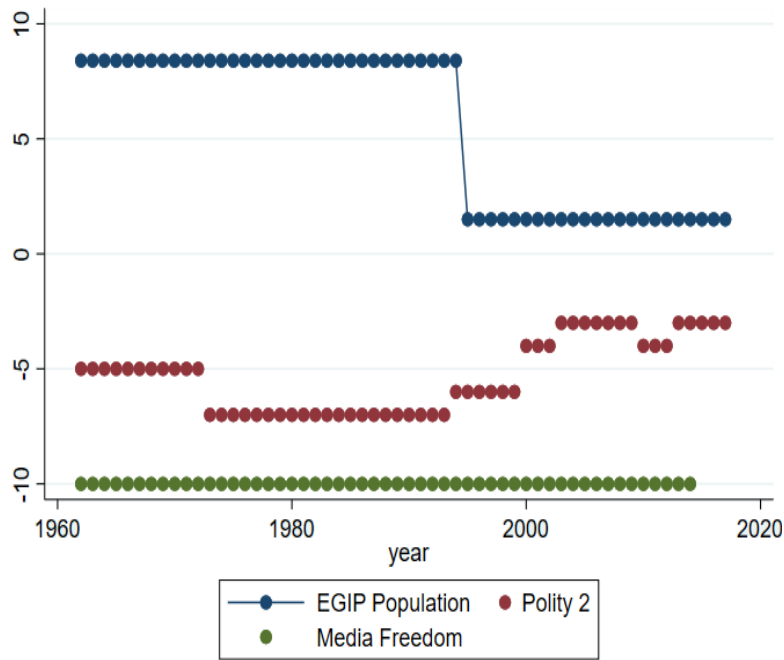
A comparative analysis of Yugoslavia and its successor states vis-à-vis Rwanda illustrates the causal mechanism of hypothesis 3. Both nations before their respective civil wars had a media score of -1. The pre-war ethnic group in power was 85% of the population in Rwanda and 82% in Yugoslavia. After the resolution of their respective ethnic conflicts, both countries experienced a shift in democracy scores. In Rwanda, the ethnic group in power status changed hands from the majority Hutus to the minority Tutsis in the aftermath of the genocide and the resolution of their civil war. This led to an EGIP comprising only 15% of the population. After the Yugoslav Wars, the Serbs remained dominant in their native Serbia. In fact, their proportion increased from 67% in 1993 to 83.8% in 2010 after the amputation of the component ethnic republics. After the conflicts resolved in Rwanda and Serbia, democracy increased. This effect was far more pronounced in Serbia and is correlated with their more sound ethnic majority. Interestingly, the media score of Rwanda remains stubbornly at -1 whereas the Serbian media score increases to 0. This correlates with hypothesis 3 which states that a more dominant EGIP will allow more media freedom and democracy because it feels less threatened in its status.

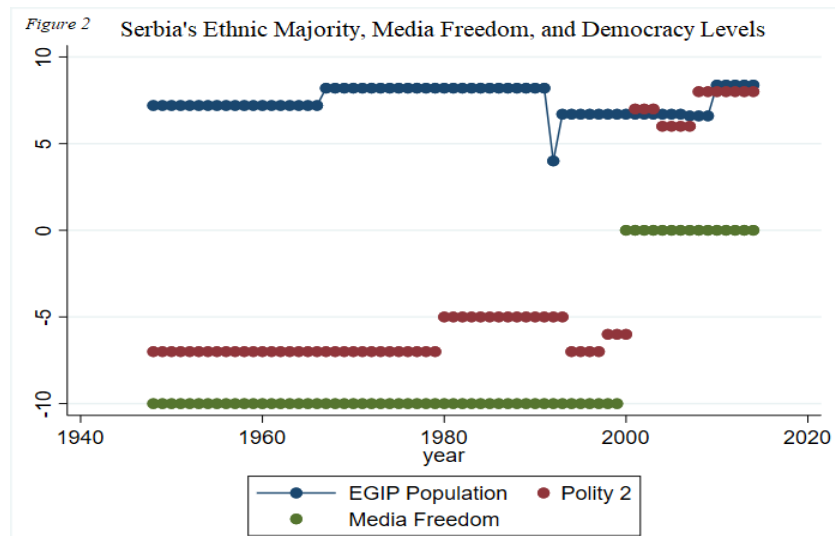
It should be noted that both countries engaged in civil wars roughly during the same period, began with approximately the same EGIP proportion, and had the same media freedom. However, the proportion of the ethnic group in power drastically declined in



Rwanda due to the swap between the Hutus and the Tutsis. Moreover, both countries started at roughly the same democracy levels but Serbia has firmly democratized while Rwanda lags behind. The Tutsi minority EGIP remains very suspicious of the Hutu excluded majority. Their democracy score hovers at -3 while Serbia has advanced to a score of 8. Both countries have democratized, but Rwanda falls behind in both democracy and media freedom due to the remaining ethnic suspicion. Refer to figures 1 and 2 to see the trends over the years.

Figure 1  
Rwanda's Ethnic Majority, Media Freedom, and Democracy Levels





For the purposes of clarity on these graphics, all variables have been placed on a -10 to 10 scale. The media freedom score has been multiplied by 10 in order to be on the same scale as polity 2. This makes a media freedom score of 1 equal to 10 and a score of -1 equal to -10. Ethnic majority is converted from a decimal by being multiplied by 10. This makes a proportion of 50% equal to 5 on the scale. While figures 1 and 2 show the predicted effects of H3 after conflict has resolved, there is strong correlative evidence to suggest that EGIP population proportion has an effect on onset as well. This, teamed with the body of evidence I submit with the other three hypotheses, indicates a robust causal relationship as well.

Finally, hypothesis 4 states that free media reduces the likelihood of non-ethnic conflict, but has limited impact on reducing ethnic based conflict. As shown before, *media score* is not significant for ethnic conflict in the general case. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the coefficient changes sign for ethnic conflict. This teamed with the loss in significance suggests another mechanism at play. I posit that

ethnic media market segmentation plays a similar role to a lack of media freedom at the national level in increasing conflict likelihood.

The Rwandan Genocide of 1994 provides a strong example of how ethnically segmented media can play an actively negative role in stoking and enflaming tensions into warfare. For the purposes of argument, I am considering the Rwandan Genocide an extension of the Rwandan Civil War. Some academic circles do not include genocides under this umbrella, but I will be including it for the following reasons. Ethnic conflict does not necessitate reciprocal violence. Violence against an ethnic group can go unanswered and still be considered as examples of ethnic warfare. While this may show an inconsistency in methods between the dataset I am using and this qualitative study, I use the Rwandan example because of its vivid illustration of the media's role in ethnic violence. The Hate Radio effectively mobilized the Hutus against the Tutsis. The Tutsis did not have effective radio or print publications at their disposal. Moreover, they lacked sufficient organizational ability to resist and fight back effectively. The lack of organized resistance does not indicate the absence of ethnic civil war. Because of genocide's rare occurrence, its appearance in a given data set is not likely to shift the quantitative side of my research either way. However, its qualitative benefit to answering the question of how media affects ethnic civil war are manifold.

In the Rwandan example, a significant proportion of the violence committed can be attributed to various media outlets. Yanagizawa-Drott in his study "Propaganda and Conflict: Evidence from the Rwandan Genocide" shows that the actions of 10% of genocideers can be attributed to the broadcasts of the Hate Radio.<sup>[38]</sup> He writes, "The broadcasts increased militia violence not only directly by influencing behavior in villages with radio reception but also

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<sup>38</sup>David Yanagizawa-Drott, Propaganda and Conflict: Evidence from the Rwandan Genocide, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Volume 129, Issue 4, November 2014, Pages 1947–1994, <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qju020>

indirectly by increasing participation in neighboring villages. In fact, spillovers are estimated to have caused more militia violence than the direct effects. Yanagizawa-Drott demonstrates strongly that, in the Rwandan Genocide, the media has the capability to exacerbate and kindle ethnic violence. It is interesting to note that the permeation of the media's reach has a worsening effect on tensions as well. Here one can see an example of the potential for violence and conflict in an ethnic context brought on by the media. It should be noted that this is not deterministic. More research needs to be done with a comprehensive dataset detailing ethnic ownership, segmentation, and permeation to make a full claim on the subject. However, the Rwandan Genocide provides a stark data point in favor of H4 and the sub-hypothesis that media plays an actively negative role.

As a trend cannot be sufficiently explained with one data point, I submit the case of ethnic violence in Yugoslavia as supplemental evidence. De la Brosse's 2003 study provides a strong body of qualitative data to work with regarding the Yugoslav Wars.<sup>[39]</sup> I again employ the Yugoslav example as a model because it has a number of cogent factors at play. First of all, one can see an EGIP declining in power as the Serbs began to lose control over a united Yugoslavia. Second, by virtue of secession, one can observe strictly segmented ethnic markets for media. Third, Radio Television of Serbia may have been able to physically broadcast to Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the non-Serb audiences there were not receptive to their messages. In Croatia and other more established Yugoslav republics, a greater degree of this phenomenon occurred.<sup>[40]</sup> Moreover, they formed their own rival media groups to tell their side of the story and call for violence to defend themselves.

The ethnic tensions aggravating the collapse of the diverse

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<sup>39</sup>De la Brosse, Renaud (2003). "Political Propaganda and the Plan to Create a "State for all Serbs": Consequences of Using the Media for Ultra-Nationalist Ends", pg 49.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pg 52.

state of Yugoslavia both gave rise to and were aggravated by various media outlets. A similar phenomenon is demonstrated in Moustafa's "Kirkuk Conflict in Its Ethnic/Political Media: The Turkmen Newspaper Alqal'a as a Model". He observes that, in an ethnically tense and segmented environment, the various groups gravitate to outlets that serve their own agenda and interests. It would be an interesting avenue of study to use similar methods as Yanagizawa-Drott to test the effect of specific media outlets on fomenting violence.

The Yugoslav example presents a scenario where multiple ethnicities had their own media outlets as well as generally their own ethnic territories. As confirmed by De La Brosse, the ethnic segments produced their own media outlets and became their own local majorities. Within these local monopolies, information competition was smothered by in-group preference.<sup>[41]</sup> This explains why a national media will have a limited effect on the regulation of ethnic tensions. Even if the national media has sufficient reach to a polity, the demonized group will mistrust the established mediascape and form their own.

In Yugoslavia, the media outlets clearly advocated for violence and attacks on other ethnicities. Famously, the NATO coalition bombed the headquarters of Radio Television of Serbia for the stated reason that it, "was making an important contribution to the propaganda war which orchestrated the campaign against the population of Kosovo".<sup>[42]</sup> De la Brosse's study of the content of Radio Television Serbia's content shows consistent demonization of Albanians, Slovenians, and other minorities. One broadcast states that Albanians were, "poisoning wells and slitting the throats of children."<sup>[43]</sup> With many such examples, it would belabor the point to

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pg 51.

<sup>42</sup> McCormack, Timothy (2006). McDonald, Avril; McCormack, Timothy (eds.). *Yearbook of International Humanitarian Law - 2003*. The Hague: T.M.C. Asser Press. ISBN 978-90-6704-203-1.

<sup>43</sup> De la Brosse, pg 50.

list them all. Suffice it to say that this media outlet among others was used to foment ethnic violence.

This model follows the assumption I made earlier about how EGIPs interact with the media. It confirms at least in an anecdotal case that, if an EGIP controls the government and the government controls the media, the EGIP will control and use the media for its ends. The Rwandan example bolsters this assumption but to a lesser degree. The Hutus constituted an EGIP but the various publications used to attack the Tutsis and other groups were not government owned. This also occurred in an environment where the established media outlets were government, and thus Hutu, controlled. The Serbs in Yugoslavia fall into this same mold with the use of Radio Television of Serbia for its propagandizing of Yugoslavia. This provides evidence that EGIPs dominant in some sectors are likely to be dominant in others. This further confirms the earlier assumption about the proxy measure of ethnic control of the media. Nevertheless, this only measures a portion of ethnic control of the media. It should be noted that this assumption is not central to the findings for H4. Rather, I posit that these findings point to a likelihood of the assumption being true.

The qualitative studies of Rwanda and Yugoslavia not only illustrate media's limited effect in restraining ethnic violence, they show that the media has the potential to take an actively negative role. Again, future research is needed to fully explore the effects of this phenomenon. Despite this, these qualitative cases provide striking evidence that ethnic control and segmentation of the media provide exploitable circumstances to stoke ethnic conflict. This is a strong answer to the question of why freedom of media expression fails to have a significant regulating effect on ethnic civil war.

Finally, it is worth considering the striking differences between the causes of ethnic versus non-ethnic war with the various controls. Here I illustrate Sambanis's point that ethnic and non-ethnic civil wars have separate causes. As one can see in Table 1, a number of standard controls either gain or lose significance between the two types of

conflict onset. This confirms Sambanis's theory that ethnic and non-ethnic wars likely have separate causal mechanisms and in some cases should be explored independently.

Beginning with economic controls, I find that the logarithmic measure of GDP loses significance for non-ethnic war. The coefficient is still negative so a one tailed test should return it to significance. Economic improvement reduces the overall likelihood of conflict onset. When stratified into ethnic and non-ethnic wars, GDP loses its significance for the ethnic type. However, the coefficient's sign is in the direction one would expect to see. This indicates that its regulating effect is likely there but remains inconclusive for regulating ethnic civil war.

For the general case, war history is insignificant, but peace years remain significant. Disaggregating into non-ethnic and ethnic, the results become more clear. Both variables are significant for ethnic conflict but insignificant for non-ethnic. Civil wars, in general, are rare occurrences. However, ethnic tensions can remain at a sub-conflict level and flare up repeatedly without leading to civil war. I suspect that violent ethnic tensions occur far more often than violent clashes with the government in general. This may spill over into outright conflict or it may not. Nevertheless, the body of cases is much greater and thus war history and peace years matter more for conflict onset.

The measure of population remains significant in all cases. As the population gets larger, the propensity for conflict also grows. It should be noted that the coefficient and significance in the ethnic case is larger than the non-ethnic case. For all civil wars, the size of the population is a sizable factor for conflict onset. The difference in the ethnic case can perhaps be explained by larger population countries being more likely to have multiple ethnic groups. Smaller population states are more likely to be homogeneous and thus not experience ethnic conflict.

The measure of oil wealth shows an interesting disparity. The amount of oil a country has is significant for civil wars in general but

loses its significance when considering ethnic and non-ethnic civil wars separately. This means that the oil wealth in a given economy matters for civil war but is not unique to ethnic or non-ethnic. There is not enough evidence to suggest that oil income directly affects ethnic or non-ethnic war. However, the data does support that an increase in oil wealth does increase the likelihood of civil wars in the general case.

Democracy remains significant in both cases but nevertheless behaves differently. The polity 2 measure is significant in non ethnic conflict whereas the squared measure is significant in ethnic war and the general case as well. Countries at the extreme ends of the democracy scale are less likely to have ethnic conflict. Dictatorships and healthy democracies are better at regulating ethnic tensions than the middling democratic states. A moderate amount of democracy is actually more dangerous for the onset of ethnic conflict. This runs counter to the conventional wisdom that democratizing states become more peaceful. Moreover, full democracies who backslide away from a free society are also at risk for ethnic conflict. The linear measure of polity 2 runs much closer to conventional wisdom. As democracy increases, civil wars become less likely. However, this is only true of non-ethnic civil wars. My findings suggest that government repression works with ethnic conflict but struggles to regulate non-ethnic war. This confirms Sambanis's theory that ethnic and non-ethnic civil wars behave much differently when interacting with the standard controls. This is illustrated in figures 3 and 4.



Figure 3

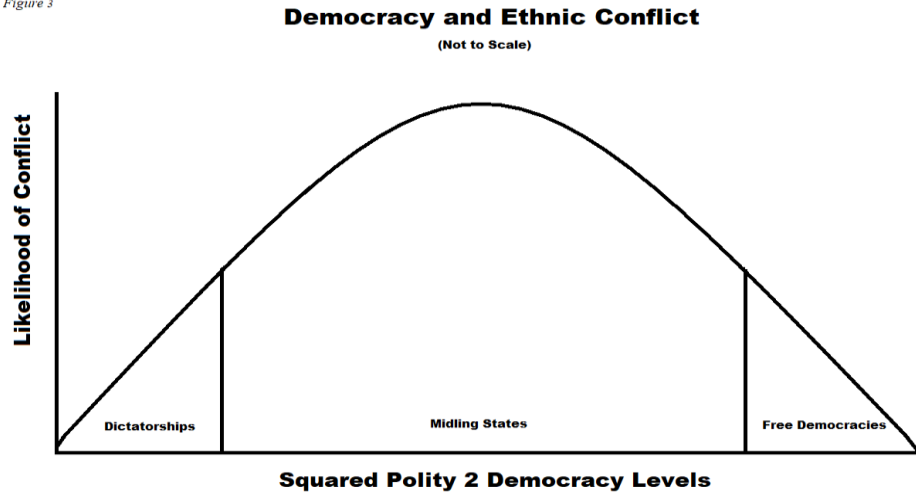
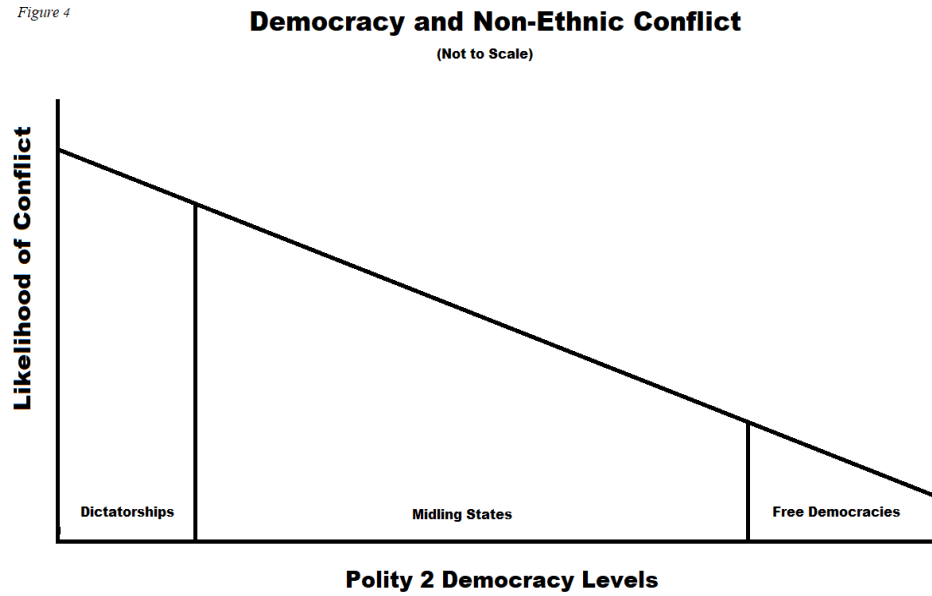


Figure 4



**Conclusion**

If one remains unconvinced by my findings, I at least show that the role of the media is critical and vastly understudied. Its role in ethnic conflict should be explored further in future research. The lack of data on ethnic ownership and segmentation of the media would be necessary to fully prove hypothesis 4. Further study of the differences between ethnic and non-ethnic wars opens the door to potential avenues of study. Finally, the advent of social media will shed new light on the phenomena discussed in this project. I predict that ethnic groups are easily able to segment and self-segregate on social media platforms. This lowers the threshold for segmentation to occur and will exaggerate Mastro's theory that media can constitute the majority of one's interaction with another ethnic group. For now, one can only utilize the findings based on traditional media. If social media behaves anything like traditional media, one can expect to see a worsening of ethnic tensions where the same segmentation occurs.

When considering the societal effects of messages calling for ethnic violence echoing on the air waves, there are a number of risk factors that can boil over into civil war. As shown in H1, media freedom does have a significant effect on the outbreak of civil war. Less media freedom is associated with more civil wars. In H2, I delved into the effect of the ethnic group in power's population proportion. I found that the raw proportion does not have an effect on the outbreak of conflict. However, I leverage the study of Buhaug et al to show that relative power disparities between ethnic groups does increase the likelihood of conflict. When an ethnic group in power declines, the power margin can suffer the fate of the ethnic security dilemma referenced by Posen. This leads directly to the findings of H3. As an ethnic group in power declines, it will restrict media freedom. As shown in H1, less media freedom is associated with more civil wars in general but not necessarily ethnic conflicts. The flip in coefficient of media freedom when dealing with ethnic civil war indicates another causal mechanism, namely segmentation. H4 shows that free media

struggles to regulate ethnic conflict.

I posit that this is due to ethnic segmentation of the media market. The localized ethnic media monopolies will act similar to those of ethnic group in power. They will restrict local access to their media market and engage in agenda setting. Ethnic tensions escalate and the probability of ethnic conflict increases. Given these findings, a country with a declining ethnic group in power, increasing ethnic segregation, and burgeoning media market segmentation will suffer less media freedom and democracy. Both of these factors increase the probability of civil war and violence. This project shows a general model that can be applied to any country. The findings thereof are probabilistic as opposed to deterministic. However, the churning and murky waters of ethnic conflict are known to surprise political scientists and individual actors alike.